

ROBERT G. INGERSOLL'S RELIGIOUS TEACHINGS

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By
HARVEY HUSTED

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Law & Stenographer,

WHITE PLAINS, - N. Y.

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"In 1441 printing was discovered. At that time the past was a vast cemetery with hardly an epitaph. The ideas of men had mostly perished in the brain that produced them. The lips of the human race had been sealed. Printing gave pinions to thought. It preserved ideas. It made it possible for man to bequeath to the future the riches of his brain and the wealth of his soul."

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HARVEY HUSTED

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ROBERT G. INGERSOLL'S RELIGIOUS TEACHINGS

I

ROBERT G. INGERSOLL was a great Teacher. I had almost said he was a great preacher, for he preached very many wonderful sermons. He did not belong to any of the so-called evangelical churches, for, like Henry Ward Beecher, he was non-sectarian and undenominational.

He belonged "to that great church that holds the world within its starlit aisles, that claims the great and good of every race and clime, that finds with joy the grains of gold in every creed, and floods with light and love the germs of good in every soul." The foundation stone of his church was love and the dome of his cathedral was the eternal blue inlaid with suns. He was not only a great preacher, but he practiced what he preached.

"I want to do what little I can," he says, "to make my country truly free, to broaden the intellectual horizon of our people, and to destroy the prejudices born of ignorance and fear. When every church becomes a school, every cathedral a university, every clergyman a teacher, and all their hearers brave and honest thinkers, then, and

not until then, will the dream of the poet, patriot, and philosopher become a real and blessed truth."

Another thing he wished to do was to free the orthodox clergy. "In spite of all they say against me," he says, "I am a great friend of theirs. Something should be done for the liberation of these men. They should be allowed to grow—to have sunlight and air. They should no longer be chained and tied to confessions of faith, to mouldy books and musty creeds."

"As we become more and more civilized greater liberty will be accorded to these men, until finally ministers will give to the world their best and highest thoughts."

"The congregations will finally get tired of hearing about the patriarchs and saints, the miracles and wonders, and will insist upon knowing something about the men and women of our day, and the accomplishments and discoveries of our time. They will finally insist upon knowing how to escape the evils of this world instead of the next. They will ask light upon the enigmas of this life. They will wish to know what we shall do with our criminals instead of what God will do with his—how we shall do away with beggary and want, with crime and misery, with prostitution, disease and famine, with tyranny in all its cruel forms, with prisons and scaffolds, and how we shall reward the honest workers and fill the world with happy homes. These are the problems for the pulpits and congregations of an enlightened future."

Robert Ingersoll was a man possessed of a great deal of practical knowledge. He was a philosopher, and spent the greater part of his life in search of fundamental truths.

He was interviewed on all the vital questions of his day, and representatives of the press eagerly sought his opinions for publication.

The question has often been asked, What was Robert Ingersoll's religious belief? There are many who think he was an unbeliever. Let us see if he was not in fact a very great believer.

He was a firm believer in Law, Labor, Liberty, and Love. He was a great believer in Truth, Justice and Mercy. He believed in the Medicine of Mirth and what may be called the Longevity of Laughter. He believed in the democracy of the home and the republicanism of the fireside. He was a great believer in the Home. "Home is where the virtues grow," he says. "The man who builds a home erects a temple. If upon this earth we ever have a glimpse of heaven, it is when we pass a home in winter, at night, and through the windows, the curtains drawn aside, we see the family about the pleasant hearth; the old lady knitting; the cat playing with the yarn; the children wishing they had as many dolls or dollars or knives, or something, as there are sparks going out to join the roaring blast; the father reading and smoking, and the smoke rising like incense from the altar of domestic joy. I never passed such a house without feeling that I had received a benediction."

He was a great believer in Science, Literature, Art, Music. "Civilization, Liberty, Justice, Charity, Intellectual Advancement," he says, "are all flowers that blossom in the drifted snow."

He believed in the religion of Reciprocity—helping

others help themselves. He believed in the sublime, unbroken, and eternal march of causes and effects, in intellectual hospitality, personal independence, and an honest search for truth. He was a great believer. He believed that you should give to every human being the same right that you claim for yourself; in keeping your mind open to the influences of nature, and receiving new thoughts with gladness. "There is no man in the world," he says, "who believes more in human nature than I do. No man believes more in the nobility and splendor of humanity than I do."

He was a great believer in the Natural. He believed that above the natural we could not rise, nor below the natural fall. He believed that a noble life enriches all the world. He believed that pure thoughts, brave words, and generous deeds can never die; that they bear fruit and add forever to the well-being of the human race. He believed in substituting for the Love of Religion the Religion of Love. Listen to his beautiful prose poem on Love.

"Love is the only bow on life's dark cloud. It is the morning and the evening star. It shines upon the babe in its cradle and sheds its radiance on the quiet tomb. It is the mother of art, inspirer of poet, patriot, and philosopher. It is the air and light of every heart, builder of every home, kindler of every fire on every hearth. It was the first to dream of immortality. It fills the world with melody, for music is the voice of love. Love is the magician, the enchanter, that changes worthless things to joy, and makes right royal kings and queens of com-

mon clay. It is the perfume of that wondrous flower the heart, and without that sacred passion, that divine swoon, we are less than beasts, but with it, earth is heaven and we are gods."

Yes, Ingersoll was a great believer. He believed in everything that was honest, just, merciful, good and true.

DID INGERSOLL HAVE A CREED?

Yes, a creed which satisfies the brain and heart. This was his creed: "To love justice, to long for the right, to love mercy, to pity the suffering, to assist the weak, to forget wrongs and remember benefits, to love the truth, to be sincere, to utter honest words, to love liberty, to wage relentless wars against slavery in all its forms; to love wife and child and friend, to make a happy home, to love the beautiful in art, in nature, to cultivate the mind, to be familiar with the mighty thoughts that genius has expressed, the noble deeds of all the world; to cultivate courage and cheerfulness, to make others happy, to fill life with the splendor of generous acts, the warmth of loving words, to discard error, to destroy prejudice, to receive new thoughts with gladness, to cultivate hope, to see the calm beyond the storm, the dawn beyond the night, to do the best that can be done, and then to be resigned."

What does he mean by cultivating hope—seeing the calm beyond the storm, the dawn beyond the night?

DID INGERSOLL BELIEVE IN HOPE?

Oh, yes! He was a great believer in Hope.

"The hope of another life was in the heart long before the 'sacred books' were written, and will remain there long after all the sacred books are known to be the works of savage and superstitious men.

"Hope is the consolation of the world.

"The wanderers hope for home. Hope builds the house and plants the flowers and fills the air with song.

"The sick and suffering hope for health; Hope gives them health and paints the roses in their cheeks.

"The lonely and forsaken hope for love.

"Hope brings the lover to their arms. They feel the kisses on their eager lips.

"The poor in tenements and huts, in spite of rags and hunger, hope for wealth. Hope fills their thin and trembling hands with gold.

"The dying hopes that death is but another birth, and Love leans above the pallid face and whispers, We shall meet again."

HOPE IS THE CONSOLATION OF THE WORLD.

"Let us hope that if there be a God he is wise and good. Let us hope that if there be another life, it will bring peace and joy to all the children of men.

"And let us hope that this poor earth on which we live may be a perfect world, a world without a crime, without a tear.

DID INGERSOLL HAVE A GOSPEL?

He certainly did—a splendid gospel—a gospel suitable to all conditions of men.

“I believe in the Gospel of Cheerfulness,” he says; “the gospel of good nature; the gospel of good health; the gospel of good living; the gospel of intelligence; the gospel of good fellowship; the gospel of justice; the gospel of Humanity.

“My gospel of health will bring life. My gospel of intelligence, my gospel of good living, my gospel of good fellowship, will cover the earth with happy homes.

“My gospel will put carpet upon your floors, pictures upon your walls, books upon your shelves, and ideas in your minds.

“My gospel will rid the world of the abnormal monsters born of ignorance and superstition.”

And then he adds:

“And I believe, too, in the Gospel of Liberty—in giving to others what we claim for ourselves—liberty, a word, without which all other words are vain. Liberty is the word that all the good have spoken. It is the hope of every loving heart, the spark and flame in every noble breast, the gem in every splendid soul, the many colored dream in every honest heart. O Liberty, float not forever in the far horizon, remain not forever in the dream of the enthusiast, the philanthropist and poet, but come and make thy home among the children of men.”

Then, too, he believed in the Gospel of Love—“love, the

magician, the enchanter, that changes worthless things to joy." If Ingersoll had any weakness, it was on the subject of love. "Man is strength, woman is beauty; man is courage, woman is love. Where the one man loves the one woman and the one woman loves the one man, the very angels leave heaven and come and sit in that house and sing for joy."

"Some people," he says, "tell me that my doctrine about loving and wives, and all that, is splendid for the rich, but it won't do for the poor. I tell you," he continues, "there is more love in the homes of the poor than in the palaces of the rich. The meanest hut with love in it is a palace fit for the gods, and a palace without love is a den only fit for wild beasts."

Then, again, Ingersoll believed in the Gospel of Kindness. "Kindness is strength," he says. "When your child commits a wrong, take it in your arms; let it feel your heart beat against its heart; let the child know that you really and truly and sincerely love it. Yet some Christians, and good Christians too, when a child commits a fault, drive it from the door and say: 'Never do you darken this house again.' And then these same people will get down on their knees and ask God to take care of the child they have driven from home. I will never ask God to take care of my children unless I am doing my level best in that same direction. Give them a little liberty and love and you cannot drive them out of the house. They will want to stay there. Make home pleasant."

Yes, Ingersoll was a great believer in Kindness. "Do you know, there isn't a man in the history of the world

whose memory we love to revere, who did not have within his heart that divine thing called kindness."

Robert G. Ingersoll had it to the full—full measure, pressed down and running over.

In speaking of the immortal Lincoln, Ingersoll says: "Abraham Lincoln was, in my judgment, in many respects, the grandest man ever President of the United States. Upon his monument these words should be written: Here sleeps the only man in the history of the world, who, having been clothed with almost absolute power, never abused it, except upon the side of mercy."

Ingersoll also believed in the Gospel of Happiness. "Happiness is the true end and aim of life. By happiness is meant, not simply the joy of eating and drinking, the gratification of the appetite, but good, well being, in the highest and noblest forms—the joy that springs from obligation discharged, from duty done, from generous acts, from being true to the ideal."

"Happiness is the legal tender of the soul."

"Joy is wealth."

"It is not necessary to be rich or to be great, or to be powerful, to be happy. The happy man is the successful man. There is only one way to be happy, and that is to make somebody else so, and you cannot be happy by going cross lots—you have got to go the regular turnpike road."

"If you are married, try to make the woman you love happy. Whoever marries simply for himself will make a mistake; but whoever loves a woman so well that he says, 'I will make her happy,' makes no mistake. And so with the woman who says, 'I will make him happy.'"

"The time to be happy is now,
The place to be happy is here,
The way to be happy is to make others happy."

"Do you know, it is a splendid thing to think that the woman you really love will never grow old to you. Through the wrinkles of time, through the mask of years, if you really love her, you will always see the face you have loved and won. And a woman who really loves a man does not see that he grows old; he is not decrepit to her; he does not tremble; he is not old; she always sees the same gallant gentleman who won her hand and heart. I like to think of it in that way. I like to think that love is eternal; and to love in that way, and then go down the hill of life together, and, as you go down, hear, perhaps, the laughter of grandchildren, while the birds of joy and love sing once more in the leafless branches of the tree of age."

Robert Ingersoll also believed in the Gospel of Peace. In his sermon on "How to Reform Mankind" he says:

"Every good man, every good woman, should try to do away with war, to stop the appeal to savage force. Man in a savage state relies upon his strength, and decides for himself what is right and what is wrong. Civilized men do not settle their differences by a resort to arms. They submit the quarrel to arbitration and courts. This is the great difference between the savage and the civilized.

"Nations, however, sustain the relations of savages to each other. There is no way of settling their disputes. Each nation decides for itself, and each nation endeavors to carry its decision into effect. This produces war.

"Thousands of men at this moment are trying to invent more deadly weapons to destroy their fellow men. For eighteen hundred years peace has been preached, and yet the civilized nations are the most warlike of the world."

"If we wish to do away with war, we must provide for the settlement of national differences by an international court. This court should be in perpetual session; its members should be selected by the various governments to be affected by its decisions, and, at the command and disposal of this court, the rest of Christendom being disarmed, there should be a military force sufficient to carry its judgments into effect. There should be no other excuse, no other business for an army or navy in the civilized world."

A quarter of a century ago, Robert G. Ingersoll predicted the downfall of the German Empire. In his sermon on "Superstition," in speaking of Spain, Portugal, and Germany, he said:

"Spain was at one time owner of half the earth, and held within her greedy hands the gold and silver of the world. At that time all nations were in the darkness of superstition. In some countries men began to interest themselves in science, but not in Spain. Some countries were in the dawn of a new day, but Spain gladly remained in the night. With fire and sword she exterminated the men who thought. Other nations grew great while Spain grew small. Day by day her power waned, but her faith in superstition increased. One by one her colonies were lost, but she kept her creed. She waged war against the great republic. Her armies were defeated and captured,

her ships battered, beached, and burned, and in her helplessness she sued for peace.

"Portugal, slowly dying, growing poorer every day, still clings to the faith. Her prayers are never answered, but she makes them still.

"Austria is nearly gone, a victim of superstition.

"Germany is traveling toward the night. God placed her Kaiser on the throne. The people must obey. Philosophers and scientists fall upon their knees and become the puppets of the divinely crowned."

In his splendid sermon on "Which Way" he gives a vision of the future: "I see a world at war, and in the storm and chaos of the deadly strife thrones crumble, altars fall, chains break, creeds change. The highest peaks are touched with holy light. The dawn has blossomed—it is day.

"I look again. I see discoverers sailing across mysterious seas. I see inventors cunningly enslave the forces of the world. I see the houses being built for schools; teachers, interpreters of nature, slowly taking the place of preachers. Philosophers arise, thinkers give the world their wealth of brain, and lips grow rich with words of truth.

"THIS IS.

"I look again, but towards the future now. I see a world at peace, where labor reaps its true reward, a world without prisons, without workhouses, without asylums for the insane, a world upon which the gibbet's shadow does not fall, a world where the poor girl, trying to win bread with the needle, that has been called the asp for the

breast of the poor, is not driven to the desperate choice of crime or death, or suicide or shame. I see a world without the beggar's outstretched palm, the miser's heartless stony stare, the piteous wail of want, the pallid face of crime, the livid lips of lies, the cruel eyes of scorn. I see a race without disease of flesh or brain, shapely and fair, the married harmony of form and function; and as I look life lengthens, fear dies, joy deepens, love intensifies, and over all in the great dome, shines the great star of human hope.

"THIS SHALL BE!"

Let us hope, that—

The times that tried men's souls is nearly o'er,
That Liberty, Love and Law may reign with Peace,
That war and want and woe and waste shall cease,
And Freedom's flag shall float on every shore.

WAS ROBERT INGERSOLL A CHRISTIAN?

Yes, he was a Christian of the highest type, but he was not orthodox. All reformation comes from being unorthodox. Orthodoxy means intellectual stagnation. Heterodoxy means progress. Of the council of clergymen which met in Salamanca in 1486 to examine and test the views of Christopher Columbus, a considerable portion held to be grossly heterodox to believe that by sailing westward, the eastern parts of the world could be reached.

"Heterodoxy," so-called, says Mr. Ingersoll, "occupies the halfway station between superstition and reason. A heretic is one who is still dominated by religion, but in the east of whose mind there is a dawn. He is one who has

seen the morning star ; he has not entire confidence in the day, and imagines in some way that even the light he sees was born of the night. In the mind of the heretic, darkness and light are mingled ; the ties of intellectual kindred bind him to the night, and yet he has enough of the spirit of adventure to look toward the east."

"Of course," he says, "I admit that Christians and heretics are both honest ; a real Christian must be honest and a real heretic must be the same. All men must be honest in what they think ; but all men are not honest in what they say. In the invisible world of the mind every man is honest. The judgment never was bribed. Speech may be false, but conviction is always honest. So that the difference between honest belief as shared by honest religious thinkers and heretics, is a difference of intelligence. It is the difference between a ship lashed to the dock, and one making a voyage ; it is the difference between twilight and dawn, that is to say, the coming of the night and the coming of the morning."

Is it necessary to believe in dreams and demonology, myths and miracles, in order to be a Christian? If so, Robert Ingersoll was not a Christian.

Is it necessary to believe in the Mosaic account of the creation, the flood, the tower of Babel, General Joshua turning back the sun, or the story of Jonah and the whale, in order to be a Christian? A very large majority of the Christian people of today, if asked that question, would say No.

One does not have to believe in all the mistakes of Moses in order to believe in the merits of Christ. Must

we believe in the origin and destiny of the human race as taught by the scriptures in order to be Christlike? Were there no Christlike men and women before the time of Christ? Is Christianity mainly a belief, or is it a life? Must you be a Christian before you can be good, or must you be good before you are a Christian? Are members of the Unitarian churches, who live according to their highest ideals—are they Christians? Members in good standing in the Universalist churches, are they Christians?

"I met a man the other day," said Robert Ingersoll, "who said to me, 'I am a Unitarian-Universalist.' 'What do you mean by that?' 'Well,' he said, 'this is what I mean—the Unitarian thinks he is too good to be damned, and the Universalist thinks God is too good to damn him, and I believe them both.'"

If a person believes substantially in the doctrine as taught by Christ, does that make him a Christian? If so, Robert Ingersoll was a Christian. That is, he was a twentieth-century Christian, and not a Christian of the first century. He was a modern, not an ancient Christian.

Shailer Matthews, professor of historical and comparative theology in the University of Chicago, speaking concerning "The Gospel and the Modern Man," says: "There are thousands of men and women of noblest Christian character, of splendid moral enthusiasm and religious earnestness, who believe in a hell of literal fire, in a personal devil, in demoniacal possession, in the absolute inerrancy of all the biblical writings, in the creation of the world in six days, in the physical coming of Christ in the sky, and in the materialistic resurrection of the body

through a miraculous recombination of its original or other particles. Such persons may be modern to their finger tips when it comes to business, but religiously and philosophically they are, to all intents and purposes, citizens of the first century of our era. Theologically speaking, they are contemporary but not modern.

"No serious thinker can fail to respect such loyalty to a literalistic gospel or to seek to emulate the earnest religion it engenders. You will find it in the hearts of the consecrated evangelists, lay workers, Salvation Army lasses and American Volunteers. But what can be done in the case of a man who cannot share in such indifference to the modern world? Shall he be forbidden the Kingdom of God except as he first rejects his science and his belief of the God of law? Must he who passionately, even heroically, holds to the absoluteness of the supernatural, timeless, spiritual life, be forced to clothe his faith in symbols he believes to be but relative and unsatisfying?"

Robert Ingersoll was a modern Christian, a model Christian, and an exemplary Christian. If it were possible for a man to live a purely Ingersollian life, he would be about as near perfect as men get to be in this world.

Of course we know that Mr. Ingersoll said that he was an Agnostic, but that had reference to matters about which he did not pretend to know. One thing is sure, he was not an Atheist, because he says that a man cannot be an Atheist because nobody knows that a God does not exist.

What does Mr. Ingersoll say concerning Christ? This is what he says: "I suppose I believe substantially in the doctrine as taught by Christ." There you have it in a nut-

shell. He believed substantially in the teachings of Christ. Any man who substantially believes and lives up to the teachings of Christ must of necessity be a Christian. What else does he say?

"Let me say here, once for all, that for the man Christ I have infinite respect. Let me say, once for all, that the place where man has died for man is holy ground. And let me say, once for all, that to that great and serene man I gladly pay the tribute of my admiration and my tears. He was a reformer in his day. He was an infidel in his time. He was regarded as a blasphemer, and his life was destroyed by hypocrites, who have in all ages done what they could to trample freedom and manhood out of the human mind. Had I lived at that time, I would have been his friend, and should he come again he will not find a better friend than I will be.

"That is for the man. For the theological creation I have a different feeling. For the man who in the darkness said, 'My God, why hast thou forsaken me?'—for that man I have nothing but respect, admiration and love. Back of the theological shreds and patches hiding the real Christ, I see a genuine man."

"You must remember," says Colonel Ingersoll, "that Christ never wrote a solitary word of the New Testament—not one word. There is an account that he once stooped down and wrote something in the sand, but that has not been preserved. He never told anybody to write a word. He never said, 'Matthew, remember this. Mark, do not forget to put that down. Luke, be sure that in your gospel you have this. John, do not forget it.' Not one word.

And it has always seemed to me that a being coming from another world, with a message of infinite importance to mankind, should at least have verified that message by his own signature. Is it not strange that he gave no orders to have his words preserved—words upon which hang the salvation of a world?

“If what is known as the Christian religion is true, nothing can be more wonderful than the fact that Matthew, Mark, and Luke say nothing about salvation by faith; that they do not even hint at the doctrine of the atonement, and are as silent as empty tombs as to the necessity of believing anything to secure happiness in this world or another.”

THE GOSPEL OF SALVATION AS TAUGHT BY CHRIST.

In his wonderful sermon entitled, “What Must We Do to Be Saved?” Robert Ingersoll says:

“A while ago I made up my mind to find out what was necessary for me to do in order to be saved.

“If I have got a soul I want it saved. I do not wish to lose anything that is of value. For thousands of years the world has been asking the question, What must we do to be saved?

Saved from poverty? No. Saved from crime? No. Tyranny? No. But, What must we do to be saved from the eternal wrath of the God who made us all? And let me say right here that if God made us, he will not destroy us. Infinite wisdom never made a poor investment. Upon all the works of an Infinite God a dividend must

finally be declared. There is no bankrupt court in heaven.

"So I made up my mind to see what I had to do in order to save my soul according to the Testament, and thereupon I read it. I read the gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and I found that the church had been deceiving me. I found that the clergy did not understand their own book—that they had been building upon passages that had been interpolated; upon passages that were entirely untrue, and I will tell you why I think so."

Robert G. Ingersoll was a great Lawyer.

He understood the framework, the anatomy, the foundations of law; was familiar with the great streams and currents and tides of authority. He had breadth and scope, resource, learning, logic, and above all a sense of justice. He was painstaking and conscientious—anxious to know the facts. He was a man of great faith, particularly in facts. He knew how to winnow the golden grains of truth from the chaff of falsehood. He knew that honesty is the oak around which all other virtues cling.

Like Descartes, he resolved to "take nothing for truth without clear knowledge that it is such." And so, with his X-ray mind, he takes up the gospels one by one to see what each has to say concerning what we must do in order to be saved.

"Now, according to the church," he says, "the first gospel was written by Matthew. As a matter of fact he never wrote a word of it—never saw it, never heard of it, and probably never will. But," he says, "for the sake of the discussion I will admit that he wrote it. I will admit that he was with Christ for three years; that he was his con-

stant companion; that he shared his sorrows and his triumphs; that he heard his words by the lonely lakes, the barren hills, in synagogue and street, and that he knew his heart and became acquainted with his thoughts and aims.

"Now let us see what Matthew says we must do in order to be saved. And I take it that, if this is true, Matthew is as good authority as any minister in the world.

"The first thing I find upon the subject of salvation is in the fifth chapter of Matthew, and is embraced in what is commonly known as the Sermon on the Mount. It is as follows:

"'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' Good," says Robert Ingersoll. "'Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.' Good! whether they belong to any church or not; whether they believe in the Bible or not.

"'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.' 'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' Good!" says Robert Ingersoll.

"In the same sermon Christ says: 'Think not that I am come to destroy the law of the prophets. I am come not to destroy but to fulfill.' And then he makes use of this remarkable language, almost as applicable today as it was then:

"'For I say unto you that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Phari-

sees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven.' Good!

"In the sixth chapter I find the following: 'For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if ye forgive men not their trespasses, neither will your father forgive your trespasses.'

"There is an offer. There is a square promise. There is a contract. I accept the conditions," says Lawyer Ingersoll. "I accept the terms, and I never will ask any God to treat me better than I treat my fellow-men. It does not say that you must believe the Old Testament, or be baptized, or join the church. Not a word about eating or fasting, denying or believing. It simply says, if you forgive others God will forgive you, and it must of necessity be true. No God could afford to damn a forgiving man.

"The next thing that I find is in the seventh chapter and the second verse: 'For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.' Good! That suits me.

"And in the twelfth chapter: 'For whosoever shall do the will of my Father that is in heaven, the same is my brother and sister and mother. For the son of man shall come in the glory of his father with his angels, and then he shall reward every man according'—to the church he belongs to? No. To the manner in which he was baptized? No. According to his creed? No. 'Then he shall reward every man according to his work.' Good! I subscribe to that doctrine," says Ingersoll.

"And in the eighteenth chapter: 'And Jesus called a little child to him and stood him in the midst; and said,

'Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.'

"I do not wonder that in his day, surrounded by Scribes and Pharisees, he turned lovingly to little children. And yet see what children the little children of God have been. What an interesting dimpled darling John Calvin was! Think of that prattling babe, Jonathan Edwards! Think of the infants that founded the Inquisition, that invented instruments of torture to tear human flesh. They were the ones that had become as little children. They were the children of faith.

"So I find in the nineteenth chapter: 'And behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?' Now, there is a fair issue. Here is a child of God asking God what is necessary for him to do to inherit eternal life. And God said to him, 'Keep the commandments?' And the child said to the Almighty, 'Which?' And Jesus said: 'Thou shalt do no murder; thou shalt not steal; thou shalt not bear false witness; honor thy father and thy mother; and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.'

"Jesus did not say to him: 'You must believe in me, that I am the only begotten son of the living God.' He did not say: 'You must be born again. You must believe the Bible. You must remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.' He simply said, 'Keep the commandments,' and repeated them.

Thereupon the young man—who I think was mistaken

—said: 'All these things have I kept from my youth up. What lack I yet?'

"Now comes an interpolation," says Ingersoll. "What right has the church to add conditions of salvation? Why should we suppose that Christ failed to tell the young man all that was necessary for him to do? Is it possible that he left out some important thing purposely to mislead?"

"In the old times, when the church got a little scarce of money, they always put in a passage praising poverty. So they had this young man ask, 'What lack I yet?' 'And Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven.' The church has always been willing to swap off treasures in heaven for cash down. And when the next verse was written the church must have been nearly bankrupt. 'And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.' Did you ever know a wealthy disciple to unload on account of that verse?"

"And then comes another verse which I believe is an interpolation: 'And everyone that hath forsaken houses, or brethren or sister, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.'

"Christ never said it. Never. 'Whosoever shall forsake father and mother.' Why, he said unto this man that asked him, 'What shall I do to inherit eternal life?'—among other things, he said, 'Honor thy father and thy

mother.' And we turn over the page and he says: 'If you will desert your father and mother you shall have everlasting life.'

"I do not accept the terms," said Ingersoll, "and I will never desert the ones I love for the promise of any God. The holiest temple beneath the stars is a home that love has built. And the holiest altar in all the wide world is the fireside around which gather father and mother and the sweet babes."

Here was a great lawyer, a tender-hearted, loving man, pleading the cause of Christ, and refusing to believe that Christ uttered any such statement, and defending him against the slander of the church.

"I find in the twenty-fifth chapter another condition of salvation," says Mr. Ingersoll. "'Then shall the king say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was ahungered and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger and ye took me in; naked and ye clothed me; I was sick and ye visited me; I was in prison and ye came unto me.' Good!" says Robert Ingersoll. "I tell you tonight that God will not punish with eternal thirst the man who has put the cup of cold water to the lips of his neighbor. God will not leave in the eternal nakedness of pain the man who has clothed his fellowmen.

"Now I have read you substantially everything in Matthew on the subject of salvation. That is all there is. There is not a word about believing anything. It is the gospel of deed, the gospel of charity, the gospel of self-

denial, and if only that gospel had been preached, persecution never would have shed one drop of blood. Not one.

"Matthew believed that God would show mercy to the merciful, that he would not allow those who fed the hungry to starve; that he would not put in the flames of hell those who had given cold water to the thirsty; that he would not cast into the eternal dungeon of his wrath those who had visited the imprisoned; and that he would not damn men who forgave others.

THE GOSPEL OF MARK.

"Let us now see what Mark thought it necessary for a man to do to save his soul. Mark substantially agrees with Matthew, and says that God will be merciful to the merciful, kind to the kind, that he will pity the pitying and love the loving.

"Mark upholds the religion of Matthew until we come to the fifteenth and sixteenth verses of the sixteenth chapter, and then we strike an interpolation put in by hypocrisy, put in by priests who longed to grasp with bloody hands the sceptre of universal power. Let me read it to you. It is the most infamous passage in the Bible. Christ never said it. No sensible man ever said it. 'And he said unto them (his disciples), Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.'

"That passage was written so that fear would give alms to hypocrisy. Now I propose to prove to you that this is an interpolation. How will I do it? In the first place, not a word is said about belief in Matthew. In the next

place, not one word about belief in Mark until I come to that verse; and where is that said to have been spoken? According to Mark, it is a part of the last conversation of Jesus Christ, just before, according to the account, he ascended bodily before their eyes.

"If there ever was an important thing happened in this world, that was it. If there is any conversation that people would be apt to recollect, it would be the last conversation with a God before he rose visibly through the air and seated himself upon the throne of the Infinite.

"We have in this Testament five accounts of the last conversation happening between Jesus Christ and his apostles. Matthew gives it, and yet Matthew does not state that in that conversation that Christ said: 'Who-soever believeth and is baptized shall be saved and whosoever believeth not shall be damned.'

"Then I turn to Luke, and he gives an account of this same last conversation, and not one word does he say upon that subject. Then I turn to John, and he gives an account of the last conversation, but not one solitary word on the subject of belief or unbelief.

"Then I turn to the first chapter of Acts, and there I find an account of the last conversation, and there is not one word upon this subject. This is a demonstration that the passage in Mark is an interpolation.

"What other reason have I got? There is not one particle of sense in it. Why? No man can control his belief. You hear evidence for and against, and the integrity of the soul stands at the scales and tells you which side rises and which side falls. You cannot

believe as you wish. You must believe as you must.

"I have another reason. I am much obliged to the gentleman who interpolated these passages. I am obliged to him that he put in some more—two more. Now listen: 'And these signs shall follow them that believe. In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them. They shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover.'

"Bring on your believer! Let him cast out a devil. I do not ask for a large one. Let him take up serpents. Let me mix a dose for the believer, and if it does not hurt him I will join the church.

"Oh! but they say, 'Those things only lasted through the apostolic age.' Let us see. 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel, and whosoever believes and is baptized shall be saved; and these signs shall follow them that believe.' How long? I think at least until they had gone into all the world. Certainly those signs should follow until all the world had been visited. And yet if that declaration was in the mouth of Christ, he then knew that one-half of the world was unknown, and that he would be dead fourteen hundred and fifty-nine years before his disciples would know that there was another continent. And yet he said, 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel,' and he knew then that it would be fourteen hundred and fifty-nine years before anybody could go.

"That passage made the horizon of a thousand years lurid with the fagot's flames. That passage contradicts the Sermon on the Mount, travesties the Lord's Prayer,

turns the splendid religion of deed and duty into the superstition of creed and credulity. I deny that doctrine. It is infamous. Christ never said it.

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE.

"Luke agrees substantially with Matthew and Mark, and then we come to the nineteenth chapter. 'And Zaccheus stood and said unto the Lord, Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor, and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.' And Jesus said unto him, 'This day is salvation come to this house.'

"That is good doctrine," says the great Agnostic. "He did not ask Zaccheus what he believed. He did not ask him: 'Do you believe in the Bible? Do you believe in the five points? Have you ever been baptized—sprinkled? Oh! immersed?' 'Half of my goods I give to the poor, and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.' And Christ said, 'This day is salvation come to this house.' Good! That is good doctrine.

"I read also in Luke that Christ, when upon the cross, forgave his murderers, and that is considered the shining gem in the crown of his mercy. He forgave his murderers. He forgave the men who drove the nails in his hands, in his feet, that plunged a spear in his side; the soldier that in the hour of death offered him in mockery the bitterness to drink. He forgave them all freely, and yet, although he would forgive them, he will in the nineteenth century, as we are told by the orthodox church,

damn to eternal fire a noble man for the expression of his honest thoughts. That will not do.

"I find, too, in Luke, an account of two thieves that were crucified at the same time. The other gospels speak of them. One says they both railed upon him. Another says nothing about it. In Luke we are told that one railed upon him, but one of the thieves looked and pitied Christ, and Christ said to that thief: 'Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.' Who was this thief? What did he believe? I do not know. Did he believe in the Old Testament? In the miracles? I do not know. Did he believe that Christ was God? I do not know. Why then was the promise made to him that he should meet Christ in paradise? Simply because he pitied suffering innocence on the cross. God cannot afford to damn any man who is capable of pitying anybody."

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

"And now we come to John, and that is where the trouble commences," says Ingersoll. "The other gospels teach that God will be merciful to the merciful, forgiving to the forgiving, kind to the kind, loving to the loving, just to the just, merciful to the good. Now we come to John, and here is another doctrine. And allow me to say that John was not written until long after the others. John was mostly written by the church.

"Jesus answered and said unto him: Verily, verily I say unto thee, Except a man be born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God.' Why did he not tell Matthew that? Why did not he tell Mark and Luke that? They never heard of it, or forgot it, or they did not believe it.

“ ‘And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.’

“In the book of John, all these doctrines of regeneration—that it is necessary to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ; that salvation depends upon belief—all these doctrines find their warrant nowhere else.

“Read Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and then read John, and you will agree with me that the three first gospels teach that if we are kind and forgiving, God will be kind and forgiving to us. In John we are told that another man can be good for us, and that the only way to get to heaven is to believe something that we know is not so. All these passages about believing in Christ, *drinking his blood* and eating his flesh, are afterthoughts. They were written by the theologians, and in a few years they will be considered unworthy of the lips of Christ.

“Now, upon these gospels that I have read the churches rest; and out of these things, mistakes and interpolations, they have made their creeds.”

WAS INGERSOLL AN ICONOCLAST?

“Then they say to me, ‘What do you propose? You have torn this down, what do you propose to give us in place of it?’

“I have not torn the good down. I have only endeavored to trample out the ignorant, cruel fires of hell. I do not tear away the passage: God will be merciful to the merciful. I do not destroy the promise: If you will

forgive others, God will forgive you. I would not for anything blot out the faintest star that shines in the horizon of human despair, nor in the sky of human hope, but I will do what I can to get that infinite shadow out of the heart of man.

“‘What do you propose in place of this?’

“Well, in the first place I propose good fellowship—good friends all around. No matter what we believe, shake hands and let it go. That is your opinion: this is mine. Science makes friends; religion, superstition, makes enemies. They say belief is important. I say no, actions are important. Judge by deed not by creed. Good fellowship, good friends, sincere men and women, mutual forbearance, born of mutual respect. I believe in the gospel of cheerfulness, the gospel of good nature, the gospel of good health, the gospel of good living, the gospel of intelligence, the gospel of education, the gospel of justice.

“I do not believe in forgiveness as it is preached by the church. If I rob Mr. Smith and God forgives me, how does that help Smith? If I, by slander, cover some poor girl with the leprosy of some imputed crime, and she withers away like a blighted flower and afterward I get the forgiveness of God, how does that help her? If there is another world, we have got to settle with the people we have wronged in this. You must reap the result of your acts. Even when forgiven by the one you have injured, it is not as though the injury had not been done. That is what I believe in. And if it goes hard with me, I will stand it, and I will cling to my logic and I will bear it like a man. My doctrine will give us health, wealth,

and happiness. Let us have the gospel of intelligence. That is the only lever capable of raising mankind. Give us intelligence and in a little while a man will find that he cannot steal without robbing himself. He will find that he cannot murder without assassinating his own joy. He will find that every crime is a mistake. He will find that only that man carries the cross who does wrong, and that upon the man who does right, the cross turns to wings that will bear him upward forever. He will find that even intelligent self-love embraces within its mighty arms all the human race.

"I have made up my mind that if there is a God, he will be merciful to the merciful. Upon that rock I stand.

"That he will not torture the forgiving. Upon that rock I stand.

"That every man should be true to himself, and that there is no world, no star, in which honesty is a crime.

"The honest man, the good woman, the happy child, have nothing to fear, either in this world, or the world to come. Upon that rock I stand."

II

From the gospels alone, Colonel Ingersoll has shown that salvation is not based upon belief, but upon good works.

"We are told that all who believe in this scheme of redemption and have faith in the redeemer will be rewarded with eternal joy. Some think that men can be saved by faith without works, some think that faith and works are both essential, but all agree that without faith there is no salvation. If you repent and believe on Jesus Christ, then his goodness will be imputed to you, and the penalty of the law, so far as you are concerned, will be satisfied by the sufferings of Christ. You may repent and reform, you may make restitution, you may practice all the virtues, but without this belief in Christ, the gates of heaven will be shut against you forever.

"That doctrine is not taught by Matthew, Mark, or Luke—only by John. John's gospel will not stand the acid test of reason. The four gospels cannot be harmonized. If John is true, the others are false. If the others are true, John is false. From this there is no escape.

"Matthew, Mark, and Luke never had the faintest conception of the Christian religion. They knew nothing of

the atonement, nothing of salvation by faith. So that if a man had read only Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and had strictly followed what he found, he would have found himself, after death, in perdition.

"Why should not we doubt St. John's gospel? It is against the doctrine of probability. It is not in accord with reason, observation, or experience. It never can be necessary for a man to throw away his reason to save his soul."

It is impossible for all to believe alike. Is it desirable that all should be exactly alike in their religious convictions?

"Do we not know," says Colonel Ingersoll, "that there are no two persons in all the world alike; no two leaves in all the forests alike, no two grains of sand upon the ocean's shore alike? Infinite diversity is the law. Religion tries to force all minds into the same mould. We should all remember that to be like other people is to be unlike ourselves.

"Nearly all people stand in horror of annihilation, and yet to give up your individuality is to annihilate yourself.

"Orthodox Christians say that doubt is dangerous. Why? Because a man who doubts is very apt to investigate, and a man who investigates very likely will reason, and a man cannot very well reason without thinking, and the free exercise of thought leads to truth, and truth is the soil in which orthodox Christianity cannot grow."

Prof. M. L. Burton, president emeritus of Smith College, in his book entitled "Our Intellectual Attitude in an Age of Criticism," says: "We live in an age of criticism. Whether we are aware of it or not, whether we approve of it or not, whether we are a part of it or not, the fact remains that the spirit of criticism has captivated our generation.

"By the term criticism we mean preeminently the method employed today by scholars in every field in search of truth, and in their eagerness to expand the borders of knowledge. It is the method which approaches every question with a clear determination to be satisfied with nothing but well attested facts. What man has thought or believed about a subject is but one element of the problem. Nothing is accepted as true or final just because a previous generation has believed it. The history of any problem is not disregarded but accepted only as an evidence of what others have thought about it. Back of their conclusions were certain facts which the critical scholar demands. He can find no satisfaction in theories, hypotheses, or beliefs save as he knows the grounds of those interpretations. He is not animated so much by a desire to prove or disprove what others believe as he is to find the ultimate truth involved in any question. For him the only defense of any truth is its strict conformity to the actual facts of a stern and unalterable outer world combined with an unqualified satisfaction of the demands of reason and experience. Such is his ideal. It becomes for the true critic his very meat and drink. All error, inaccuracy, and false inference he abhors. He demands

the truth. Consequently as he approaches a subject he proposes to learn all there is to be known about it. If it is a literary document, he insists upon knowing as accurately as possible when it was written, under what circumstances it was produced, out of what sort of civilization it came, and in general what the background was upon which it appeared. He wishes to know, if possible, who the author was, what his purpose was in writing, to whom the work was addressed, what his own experience had been which prompted his message, what other documents he produced and at what time in his career the particular work under investigation was written.

"The true critic, moreover, is determined to know whether more than one hand is evident in the document, whether later writers or scribes have made mistakes in copying, or have deliberately altered the text, or have omitted or added new sections. He therefore studies carefully every word and sentence and follows with the closest scrutiny the development of the thought to test its genuineness and originality. . . .

"It is this sort of an approach to a subject, this method by which a scholar endeavoring to arrive at tenable conclusion, this means by which he struggles to find new truth and make new discoveries that we mean when we use the term 'criticism.' . . . The most perplexing illustration of the statement that we live in an age of criticism is found in the realm of a biblical scholarship. . . . Witness, for example, the extent and variety of the criticism passed upon the Christian church. We are told that it is inefficient and ill-adjusted to the needs of modern society. Statistics are

used to show the decline in attendance and accessions. Great, nation-wide campaigns are conducted in the name of Men and Religion, because it is alleged that the church has lost its grasp on men. It is asserted that the church fails to interest the young people and that a deplorable chasm exists between it and the laboring classes. It is insisted that the average church has failed to sense the remarkable changes in current thought, does not understand the point of view of the modern man, and is making absurd creedal demands of those scientifically trained.

"Criticism is rampant. It is king, and just because criticism is king, doubt is rampant."

We now see that "a profound change is taking place in the world of thought," as proclaimed by Mr. Ingersoll in his article on "The Christian Religion" published in *The North American Review* in 1881, and that the pulpit is losing because the people are growing. "The dogmas of the past no longer reach the level of the highest thought, nor satisfy the hunger of the heart."

Robert Ingersoll did not regard Jesus Christ as divine. He regarded him as a devout Jew, and held that in his utterances he was true to his theory, to his philosophy. "His sayings that are, in my judgment, in accordance with what I believe to have been his philosophy, I accept, and the others I throw away. He lived a self-denying loving life, and died for what he believed to be the truth." The men and women of intelligence do not look upon Christ as a creator or a redeemer, but rather as a reformer.

Robert Ingersoll thought too much of the loving char-

acter of Christ to attribute to him many of the doctrines taught in St. John's gospel.

Robert Ingersoll regarded the Bible as a collection of books, written by unknown men in unknown times. Modern Christianity is reluctantly, but steadily, tending to the conception of the Bible's human origin, and Ingersoll, more than any other man, is responsible for the improvement.

He regarded the Old Testament as a history of the Jewish people, and the New Testament as containing many sublime truths, but nothing superhuman. Only so far as the Bible speaks the truth is it holy and sacred.

The intelligent men and women of today do not generally believe that God is the author of the Bible. God is a world maker, not a book maker. It is a very easy thing to distinguish between the things that God has made, and man has made. Behold, the heavens! How majestically the stars twinkle. With what precision the planets move. With what infinite order and harmony they make their celestial journeys, giving us the same signs of the Zodiac today as when Christ was born in Bethlehem. The constellations bear the imprint of God's handiwork. If the Bible were really and truly written by the finger of God, we could not fail to see the imprint of his omnipotent fingers. We see it in bud and blossom and ripened fruit; in sowing and reaping; in sunshine and in shower, in mountain peak and perfumed dell, but we fail to see the print of his finger in the books called the Bible any more distinctly than in many other books.

Of the sacred myths, Ingersoll says: "We find, in all

these records of the past, philosophies and dreams, and efforts stained with tears, of great and tender souls who tried to pierce the mystery of life and death, to answer the eternal questions of the Whence and Whither, and vainly sought to make with bits of shattered glass, a mirror that would in very truth, reflect the face and form of Nature's perfect self. These myths were born of hopes, and fears, and tears and smiles, and they were touched and colored by all there is of joy and grief between the rosy dawn of birth and death's sad night. They clothed even the stars with passion, and gave to gods the faults and frailties of the sons of men. In them, the winds and waves were music, and all the lakes and streams and springs, the mountains, woods, and perfumed dells were haunted by a thousand fairy forms. They filled the veins of Spring with tremulous desire; made tawny Summer's billowed breast the throne and home of love; filled Autumn's arms with sun-kissed grapes and gathered sheaves; and pictured Winter as a weak old king who felt, like Lear upon his withered face, Cordelia's tears.

"These myths, though false, are beautiful, and have for many ages and in countless ways enriched the heart and kindled thought. But if the world were taught that all these things are true and all inspired of God, and that eternal punishment will be the lot of him who dares deny or doubt, the sweetest myth of all the Fabled World would lose its beauty, and become a scorned and hateful thing to every brave and thoughtful man."

"The people have outgrown the myths and miracles. The church has failed to keep in touch with intellectual

advancement. It has stood in fear of the sciences. From Galileo to Haeckel, it has not been in sympathy with the great thinkers. In order to make them good it has depended too much upon fear, and now that we know there is no cause for fear, the people are drifting away from the churches."

After listening to a discussion on Evolution, a mother said to her daughter, "Isn't it outrageous that we have to listen to such heresy?" "Yes, but, mother, the serious part of it all is that it is true, and if it is true, what are we to do about it?" "Well," said the mother, "the only thing for us to do is to suppress it."

Truth is the foundation, the superstructure, and the glittering dome of progress, says Ingersoll.

"Nothing is greater, nothing is of more importance, than to find amid the errors and darkness of this life a shining truth. And yet, in order to preserve orthodox Christianity, a great many good Christian people think it is necessary that the truth should be suppressed.

"All the sciences except theology are eager for facts, hungry for truth. On the brow of the finder of a fact a laurel is placed. In a theological seminary, if a professor finds a fact inconsistent with the creed, he must keep it secret or deny it, or lose his place."

"Take theology from the world, and natural love remains. Science is still here, music will not be lost, the page of history will still be open, the walls of the world will still be adorned with art, and the niches rich with sculpture.

"I have often wondered," says Mr. Ingersoll, "why somebody did not start a church on a sensible basis.

"My idea is this: There are of course in every community lawyers, doctors, merchants, and people of all trades and professions who have not the time during the week to pay any particular attention to history, poetry, art, or song.

"Now it seems to me that it would be a good thing to have a church, and for these men to employ a man of ability, of talent, to preach to them Sundays, and let this man say to this congregation: Now I am going to preach to you for the first few Sundays, eight or ten or twenty, we will say, on the art, poetry, and intellectual achievements of the Greeks.

"Let this man study all the week and tell his congregation Sunday what he has ascertained. Let him give to his people the history of such men as Plato, as Socrates, what they did; or Aristotle, of his philosophy; of the great Greeks, their statesmen, their dramatists, their poets, actors, and sculptors, and let him show the debts that modern civilization owes to these people. Let him, too, give their religions, their mythology—a mythology that has sown the seed of beauty in every land.

"Then let him take up Rome. Let him show what a wonderful and practical people they were; let him give an idea of their statesmen, orators, poets, lawyers, because probably the Romans were the greatest lawyers. And so let them go through with nation after nation, biography after biography, and at the same time let there be a Sunday school connected with this church where the children shall be taught something of importance.

“For instance, teach them botany, and when a Sunday is fair, clear and beautiful, let them go to the fields and woods with their teachers, and in a little while they will become acquainted with all kinds of trees and shrubs and flowering plants. I believe that such a church and such a Sunday school would at the end of a few years be the most intelligent collection of people in the United States.

“To teach the children all of these things, and to teach their parents, too, the outlines of every science, so that every listener would know something of geology, something of astronomy—how much better would that be than the old talk about Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the fall of man and the Garden of Eden, the flood and the atonement, and the wonders of Revelation!”

III

WHY DID ROBERT INGERSOLL ATTACK ORTHODOX CHRISTIANITY?

Soon after the Civil War there was a great revival of emotional Christianity. The churches were teaching the doctrine of the total depravity of the human heart; that every soul that finds its way to the shore of this world is against God, and naturally hates God; that the little dimpled child in the cradle is simply a chunk of depravity.

The Presbyterian clergy were teaching the doctrine of foreordination, predestination, and election, that an unbaptized infant dying went straight to hell.

The Methodists were teaching that Satan was roaming around like a roaring lion, seeking whom he might devour. All the orthodox churches were teaching the infamous doctrine of everlasting damnation to the unconverted and unbaptized.

Ministers were taking for their texts, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" "If the righteous scarcely are saved, where will the ungodly appear?" In every hamlet there was a praying band, holding nightly meetings, exhorting and entreating men, women, and children to flee from the wrath of God. They would shout: "Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation. Tomorrow it may be too late.

Though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be made white as snow."

Children were frightened, women became hysterical, and strong men grew pale and serious-minded. The people seemed to be temporarily insane.

Robert Ingersoll heard hundreds of evangelical sermons. He heard hundreds of the most fearful descriptions of the tortures inflicted in hell, of the horrible state of the lost, of that terrible doctrine of fear, force and frightfulness, and he made up his mind to do what he could, not to get people out of hell, but to get hell out of the people.

He addressed large and intelligent audiences on "the Gods," "Some Mistakes of Moses," "The Liberty of Man, Woman and Child," "Orthodoxy," "What Must We Do to Be Saved?" and many other subjects. He fought the Clergy and succeeded so well in extinguishing the fires of hell that today there is scarcely a single red-hot coal left.

With this wit, wisdom, and eloquence he laughed the Devil out of Court. The Clergy attacked him on all sides, declaring that he was insincere, that he was making light of holy things, and that he was destroying the consolation naturally arising from a belief in an everlasting hell.

But Ingersoll fought bravely on, and said:

"I oppose the church because she is the enemy of liberty; because her dogmas are infamous and cruel; because she humiliates and degrades woman; because she teaches the doctrine of eternal torment, and the natural depravity of man; because she insists upon the absurd, impossible, and senseless; because she discourages self-

reliance and laughs at good works; because she believes in vicarious virtue and vicarious vice, vicarious punishment and vicarious reward; because she regards repentance of more importance than restitution and because she sacrifices the world we have for one we know not of."

And then he adds: "The free and generous, the tender and affectionate, will understand me. Those who have escaped from the grated cells of a creed will appreciate my motives. The sad and suffering wives, the trembling and loving children will thank me. This is enough."

EDGAR LEE MASTERS' TRIBUTE TO INGERSOLL.

"To the lovers of Liberty, everywhere,
But chiefly to the youth of America
Who did not know Robert Ingersoll,
Remember that he helped to make you free!
He was a leader in a war of guns for freedom,
But a general in the war of ideas for freedom!
He braved the misunderstanding of friends,
He faced the enmity of the powerful small of soul,
And the insidious power of Rome;
He put aside worldly honors,
And the sovereignty of place,
He stripped off the armor of institutional friendships
To dedicate his soul to the terrible deities of Truth and
Beauty,
And he went down into age and into the shadow
With love of men for a staff
And the light of his soul for a light,
And with these alone!

O you martyrs trading martyrdom for heaven,
And self-denial for eternal riches,
How does your work and your death compare
To a man's for whom the weal of the race
And the cause of humanity here and now were enough
To give life meaning and death as well?
I have not seen such faith in Israel!"

DID ROBERT G. INGERSOLL BELIEVE IN A GOD?

If he did believe in a God, in what God did he believe? In the Pittsburgh Despatch of December 11, 1880, there appeared an interview with Robert Ingersoll, in which he was asked the question: "Do you believe in a God; and if so, what kind of a God?"

"Let me in the first place lay a foundation for an answer," said Mr. Ingersoll. "Man gets all food for thought through the medium of the senses. The effect of nature upon the senses, and through the senses upon the brain, must be natural. All food for thought, then, is natural. As a consequence of this, there can be no supernatural idea in the human brain. Whatever idea there is must have been a natural product. If, then, there is no supernatural idea in the human brain, then there cannot be in the human brain an idea of the supernatural. If we can have no idea of the supernatural, and if the God of whom you speak is admitted to be supernatural, then, of course, I can have no idea of him, and I certainly can have no very fixed belief on any subject about which

I have no idea. There may be a God for all I know. There may be a thousand of them."

It is a mistake to suppose, as many people do, that Ingersoll denied the existence of a God of infinite wisdom. What he did deny was the existence of such a God as the Jehovah of the Jews. "Let me say once for all, he says, that when I speak of God, I mean the being described by Moses, the Jehovah of the Jews. There may be, for aught I know, somewhere in the unknown shoreless vast, some being whose dreams are constellations and within whose thought the infinite exists. About this being, if such a one exists, I have nothing to say. He has written no books, inspired no barbarians, required no worship, and has prepared no hell in which to burn the honest seeker after truth. When I speak of God, I mean that God who prevented man from putting forth his hand and taking of the fruit of the tree of life that he might live forever; of that God who multiplied the agonies of woman, increased the weary toil of man, and in his anger drowned a world; of that God whose altars reeked with human blood, who butchered babes, violated maidens, enslaved men, and filled the earth with cruelty and crime; of that God who made heaven for the few, hell for the many, and who will gloat forever and ever upon the writhings of the lost and damned.

"And if there be a God who keeps a record of events, I wish him to write in the book of his remembrance opposite my name that I denied all those things for him."

The orthodox Christians in their confessions of faith describe God as a being without body, parts, or passions.

"I defy any man in the world to write a better description of nothing," says Colonel Ingersoll.

"You cannot conceive of a finer word-painting of a vacuum—without body, parts, or passions. This description of God is simply an effort of the church to describe a something of which it has no conception."

If Mr. Ingersoll had admitted that he did believe in a God, he would have been asked to define him, and on that subject he has said: "I have never heard any God described that I believe in." Ingersoll, with all the wealth of his imagination, would not attempt to describe God. The descriptions of God have not been adequate enough, comprehensive enough, or exalted enough. No greater compliment could be paid to a Deity than to say: "I have never heard any God described that I believe in."

Robert Ingersoll was a great lover of Nature. In an interview concerning the Rev. Henry Ward Beecher, Mr. Ingersoll said: "The real difference between us is, Mr. Beecher says God, I say Nature. The real agreement between us is, we both say Liberty."

Good old Dame Nature was Robert Ingersoll's god. "Let the ghosts of superstition fade away, the world is here with its hills and seas and plains, with its seasons of smiles and frowns, its spring of leaf and bud, its summer of shade and flower and murmuring stream; its autumn with the laden boughs, when the withered banners of the corn are still, and gathered fields are growing strangely wan; while death, poetic death, with hands that color what they touch, weaves in the autumn wood her tapestries of gold and brown."

Yes, Ingersoll loved Nature and Nature loved him. "The rise and set of sun, the birth and death of day, the dawns of silver and the dusks of gold, the wonders of the rain and snow, the shroud of Winter and the many-colored robe of Spring, the lonely moon with nightly loss or gain, the serpent lightning and the thunder's voice, the tempest's fury and the zephyr's sigh, the threat of storm and promise of the bow, cathedral clouds with dome and spire, earthquake and strange eclipse, frost and fire, the snow-crowned mountains with their tongues of flame, the fields of space sown thick with stars, the wandering comets hurrying past the fixed and sleepless sentinels of night, the marvels of the earth and air, the perfumed flower, the painted wing, the waveless pool that held within its magic breast the image of the startled face, the mimic echo that made a record in the viewless air, the pathless forest and the boundless seas, the ebb and flow of tides, the slow, deep breathing of some vague and monstrous life, the miracle of birth, the mystery of dream and death, and over all the silent and immeasurable dome.

"These were the warp and woof, and at the loom sat Love and Fancy, Hope and Fear, and wove the wondrous tapestries whereon we find pictures of gods and fairy lands and all the legends that were told when Nature rocked the cradle of the infant world."

IV

DID ROBERT INGERSOLL HAVE HOPE OF IMMORTALITY?

Yes. Search the libraries of the world and you will not find anything that compares with Ingersoll's description of life, death, and immortality.

"When one whom we hold dear has reached the end of life and laid his burden down, it is but natural for us, his friends, to pay the tribute of respect and love; to tell his virtues, to express our sense of loss and speak above the sculptured clay some word of hope."

Ingersoll put the star of hope above the humblest grave. "If there is beyond the veil, beyond the night called death, another world to which men carry all the failures and the triumphs of this life; if above and over all there be a God who loves the right, an honest man has naught to fear.

"If there be another world in which sincerity is a virtue, in which fidelity is loved and courage honored, then all is well with the dear friends whom we have lost.

"The storm is spent, the winds are hushed, the aching heart has ceased to beat, and within the brain all thoughts, all hopes and fears, ambitions, memories, rejoicings and regrets, all images and pictures of the world of life, are now as though they had not been. And yet, Hope, the

child of Love, the deathless, beyond the darkness sees the dawn.

"Nothing is nobler than to plant the flower of gratitude on the grave of those who have labored for the good of all.

" 'Gratitude is the fairest flower that sheds its fragrance in the human heart.'

"Loving words sow seeds of love in every gentle heart. In the great drama of human life, all are actors, and no one knows his part. In this great play the scenes are shifted by unknown forces, and the commencement, plot, and end are still unknown, are still unguessed. One by one the players leave the stage, and others take their places. There is no pause, the play goes on. No prompter's voice is heard, and no one has the slightest clue to what the next scene is to be.

"Will this great drama have an end? Will the curtain fall at last? Will it rise again upon some other stage? Reason says perhaps, and Hope still whispers, yes."

"Only flowers should be laid upon the tomb. In life's last pillow there should be no thorns. A little while ago a babe was found, one that had been abandoned by its mother, left as a legacy to chance or fate. The warm heart of Mary Fiske, now cold in death, was touched. She took the waif and held it lovingly to her breast and made the child her own. We pray thee, Mother Nature, that thou wilt take this woman and hold her as tenderly in thy arms as she held and pressed against her generous, throbbing heart, the abandoned babe."

"Let us believe that pure thoughts, brave words and

generous deeds can never die. Let us believe that they bear fruit and add forever to the well being of the human race. Let us believe that a noble, self-denying life increases the moral wealth of man, and gives assurance that the future will be grander than the past."

"When the Angel of Death, the masked and voiceless, enters the door of home, there come with her all the daughters of Compassion, and of these, Love and Hope remain forever.

"In the presence of death, how beliefs and dogmas wither and decay! How loving words and deeds burst into blossom! Pluck from the tree of life these flowers, and there remain but the barren thorns of bigotry and creed."

"All wish for happiness beyond this life.

"All hope to meet the loved and lost.

"In every heart there grows this sacred flower. Immortality is a word that Hope through all the ages has been whispering to Love. A loved one dies and we wish to meet again; and from the affection of the human heart grew the great oak of the hope of immortality.

"Wherever men have loved, wherever they have dreamed, wherever hope has spread its wings, the idea of immortality has existed.

"The idea of immortality, that like a sea has ebbed and flowed in the human heart, with its countless waves of hope and fear beating against the shores and rocks of time and fate was not born of any book, nor of any creed, nor of any religion. It was born of human affection, and it will continue to ebb and flow beneath the mists and

clouds of doubt and darkness as long as love kisses the lips of death. It is the rainbow Hope, shining upon the tears of grief."

"The mystery of life and death we cannot comprehend. The miracle of thought we cannot understand. This chaos called the world has never been explained. The golden bridge of life from gloom emerges and on shadow rests. Beyond this we do not know. Fate is speechless, destiny is dumb, and the secret of the future has never yet been told.

"We love, we wait, we hope. The more we love the more we fear. Upon the tenderest hearts the deepest shadows fall. All paths, whether filled with thorns or flowers, end here. Here success and failure are the same. The rag of wretchedness and the purple robe of power all difference and distinction lose in this democracy of death. Character survives, goodness lives, Love is immortal.

"And yet to all a time may come when the fevered lips of life will long for the cool, delicious kiss of death when, tired of the dust and glare of day, we all shall hear with joy the rustling garments of the night.

"What can we say of death? What can we say of the dead? Where they have gone reason cannot go, and from thence revelation has not come. But let us believe that above the cradle Nature bends and smiles, and lovingly above the dead in benediction holds her outstretched hands.

"I know how vain it is to gild a grief with words, and yet I wish to take from every grave its fear. Here in

this world, where life and death are equal kings, all should be brave enough to meet what all the dead have met.

"The future has been filled with fear, stained and polluted by the heartless past. From the wondrous tree of life, the buds and blossoms fall with ripened fruit, and in the common bed of earth, patriarchs and babes sleep side by side. . . . No man, standing where the horizon of a life has touched a grave, has any right to prophesy a future filled with pain and tears.

"Maybe that death gives all there is of worth to life. If those we press and strain within our arms could never die, perhaps that love would wither from the earth. Maybe this common fate treads from out the paths between our hearts the weeds of selfishness and hate. And I had rather live and love where death is king, than have eternal life where love is not. Another life is naught unless we know and love again the ones who love us here."

V

"Beware, when God lets loose a thinker on this planet!" says Emerson. Robert G. Ingersoll was a great thinker. He was the greatest exponent of liberal thought this world has ever known, and he devoted the greater part of his life to the cause of Freedom, and to that one thing worth living for, worth fighting for, and worth writing for, and that is, Liberty for Man, Woman, and Child. "His voice was for the right when freedom's friends were few."

He saw the orthodox world standing in the way of intellectual progress. The human race was imprisoned. Upon the brain was the fetter of superstition.

Parents believed Geology to be a dangerous study, and not suitable for the minds of children, because it did not harmonize with the book of Genesis.

Astronomy was a science that should be discouraged, because it led to doubt concerning such stories as the Flood, the Tower of Babel, and General Joshua stopping the sun and moon.

Philosophy was thought to be a branch of knowledge calculated to make men deny ecclesiastical authority.

These sciences, based on truth, were not welcome guests in the orthodox world, when Ingersoll attacked the Christianity of his day.

Such men as Darwin, Huxley, Tyndall, Spencer, Hume, and a host of others who have filled the world with intellectual light, received little or no praise from an orthodox pulpit.

Robert Ingersoll did not wish to destroy Christianity as taught by Christ, but he sought to destroy the theological weeds which were choking true religion, so that we might garner the golden grains of truth and joy.

His idea was that theology had no more to do with true religion than graft has with good government.

Someone has said that a great man is the mainspring in the wonderful machinery by which God from time to time revolutionizes the world. Robert Ingersoll revolutionized religious thought. He was instrumental in removing the theological thorns, but the roses of religion he did not disturb. He struck a sympathetic chord in the human heart that will continue to vibrate through all the ages.

He did for mental freedom what Lincoln did for physical freedom. If God raised up Abraham Lincoln to take the shackles from the limbs of slaves, then God raised up Robert Ingersoll to take the fetters from the brain of man.

Robert Ingersoll was a Philanthropist. He lived for others, and allowed others to live for themselves. No one can overestimate the good accomplished by this marvelous man. He helped to slay the heart-devouring monster of the Christian world. He tried to civilize the church, to humanize the creeds, to soften pious hearts of stone, to take the fear from mother's hearts, the chains

of creed from every brain, to put the star of hope in every sky and over every grave.

Attacked on every side, maligned by those who preached the law of love, he wavered not, but fought whole-hearted to the end.

He was extravagantly charitable, a model of virtue, a lover of liberty and a benefactor of the human race.

His mind was free, his heart was pure, and his conscience stainless. He reaped the harvest of his brain, and left to humanity a treasure that time cannot tarnish—a monument not made with hands, he left with us, more enduring than granite, more inspiring than art, and in the shadow of which superstition cannot grow.

The star of Ingersoll is the brightest orb in the oratorical sky. He was the lord of logic and laughter. He had the presence, the pose, the voice, the face that mirrored thought, the unconscious gesture of the orator.

He had a wide horizon and a mental sky, logic as unerring as mathematics, humor as rich as Autumn when the boughs and vines bend with the weight of ripened fruit, while the forests flame with scarlet, brown, and gold.

In his laughter there was logic, in his wit wisdom, and in his humor philosophy and philanthropy.

He was a supreme artist. He painted pictures with words. He knew the strength, the velocity of verbs, the color, the light and shade of adjectives.

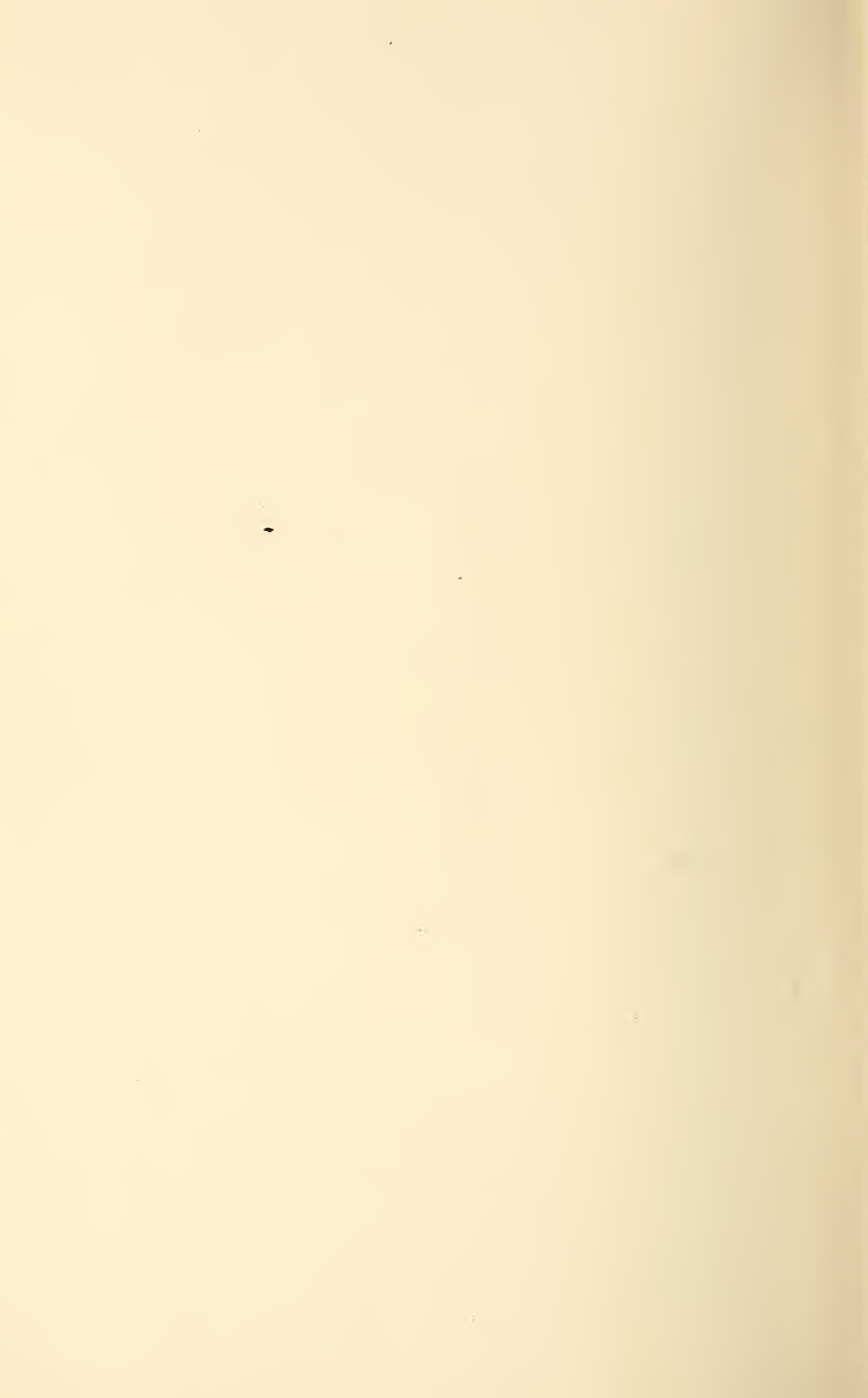
He understood the warp and woof of language, and with the simplest words could weave exquisite garments of thought and magnificent robes of ideas.

"Nothing can be grander than to sow the seeds of

noble thoughts and virtuous deeds, to liberate the bodies and the souls of men, to earn the grateful homage of a race, and then, in life's last shadowy hour, to know that the historian of Liberty will be compelled to write your name."



"Farewell, brave soul! Upon thy grave I lay this tribute of respect and love. When last our hands were joined, I said these parting words: 'Long life!' And I repeat them now."



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